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Oceans and the law of the sea

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Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Summary

The present addendum has been prepared pursuant to paragraph 179 of General Assembly resolution 64/71 of 4 December 2009, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to present to it at its sixty-fifth session the views received from States on the fundamental building blocks of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-economic Aspects.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in resolution 64/71 of 4 December 2009, noted with appreciation the report on the "assessment of assessments" of the Group of Experts established pursuant to resolution 60/30 and took note of the report on the results of the "assessment of assessments" submitted in pursuance of that resolution by the lead agencies, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (A/64/88). By the same resolution, it welcomed the meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole to recommend to it, at its sixty-fourth session, a course of action on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-economic Aspects, based on the outcomes of the fourth meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group which was convened in New York from 31 August to 4 September 2009 in accordance with paragraph 157 of General Assembly resolution 63/111. Further, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole concerning a framework for the Regular Process, its first cycle and a way forward, and the need for further progress to be made on the modalities for the implementation of the Process prior to the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly (see A/64/347, annex).

2. At its meeting in 2009, the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole had recommended a framework for the Regular Process that would, subject to further consideration by Member States, consist of: (a) the overall objective for the Regular Process (A/64/347, annex, paras. 7-9); (b) a description of the scope of the Process (A/64/347, annex, paras. 18-20); (c) a set of principles to guide its establishment and operation (A/64/347, annex, para. 21); and (d) the best practices on key design features for the Process, as identified by the Group of Experts (A/64/88, annex, part two, paras. 46 and 47). The Ad Hoc Working Group had also recommended that capacity-building, sharing of data, information and transfer of technology be crucial elements of the framework.

3. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/71, an informal meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole will be convened from 30 August to 3 September 2010 to give further consideration to, and make recommendations to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session on, the modalities for the implementation of the Regular Process, including the key features, institutional arrangements and financing. In addition, the Ad Hoc Working Group will specify the objective and scope of the first cycle of the Regular Process, the key questions to be answered and the primary target audiences in order to ensure that the assessments are relevant for decision makers. The Working Group will also further consider and make recommendations on the terms of reference for the voluntary trust fund and the scholarship fund referred to in paragraph 183 of resolution 64/71.

4. In paragraph 179 of resolution 64/71, the General Assembly invited States, as a means to facilitate decisions on the first cycle of the Regular Process, to submit their views to the Secretary-General on the fundamental building blocks of the Regular Process, and requested the Secretary-General to present these views to it at its sixty-fifth session in the context of his annual report on oceans and the law of the sea. By a note verbale dated 23 December 2009, the Secretariat invited all States to

submit their views. In response, submissions were received from nine States[1] and the European Union and its member States. The present report, which will be made available also to the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, presents a summary of the submissions received.

II. Views of States on the fundamental building blocks identified in the report on the results of the "assessment of assessments"

A. General views

5. A number of States presented general views regarding the Regular Process. Argentina and Brazil expressed support for the recommendations made by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole at its first meeting, held from 31 August to 4 September 2009. The Philippines indicated that it concurred with the fundamental building blocks identified by the Ad Hoc Working Group.

6. The United States of America expressed the view that the findings of the report on the "assessment of assessments", including the fundamental building blocks of the Regular Process, were sound and provided a solid foundation from which to move forward, in particular the principles and best practices set forth in chapter 4 of the report.

B. Building capacity

7. Brazil stressed that if the Regular Process were to successfully carry out its role, additional efforts for national capacity-building were required. Methodologies for environmental assessment and monitoring and enhancement of each country's capacity would guarantee more complete and coherent inputs and strengthen the possibility of the Regular Process building a network of scientific activity, which constituted another fundamental building block of the Process (see sect. D below). Scientific assessments should be driven on the basis of countries' capacities, and take into account their economic and social conditions.

8. Argentina stressed that it was essential for developing States to participate in the Regular Process, both in terms of the institutional structure and all of its activities, through capacity-building and transfer of technology. China also noted that relevant capacity-building should be undertaken, with special emphasis on strengthening the capacity of developing countries. Madagascar stated that although it had some research infrastructure, the technical and material capacities of its existing institutions needed to be strengthened to enable them to achieve their expected results in a timely manner. It therefore requested that special treatment be given to the least developed countries and that they be provided with the financial support, technology and capacity-building assistance that would enable them to fully perform their role in the Regular Process.

[1] Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Cuba, Madagascar, Philippines, Singapore and United States of America.

9. Cuba expressed the view that its sustained research into and assessment of the oceans and seas had enjoyed international recognition. With that experience, Cuba could offer advice to the States in the region and serve as a centre for capacity-building and technology transfer. At the same time, Cuba pointed out that developing countries must have the necessary financial resources to undertake training (see also para. 59).

10. The European Union considered capacity-building a fundamental element for the long-term success of the Regular Process. Capacity-building should strengthen mechanisms for marine management and the capability to carry out assessments. This would help to counteract the present fragmentation of information resulting from many different and globally unevenly distributed assessments. According to the European Union, however, a distinction should be made between assessment capacity and management capacity, and the role of the Regular Process with respect to those capacities should be clarified.

11. The European Union proposed the development of an inventory of the existing opportunities and arrangements for capacity-building to carry out assessments, as well as the establishment of an overview of capacity-building priorities. It expressed the view that the Regular Process should not undertake direct capacity-building initiatives but rather be responsible for the facilitation and identification of capacity-building projects through existing processes and instruments. Accordingly, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), the World Bank and the donor community should be encouraged to interact with the Regular Process in regard to capacity-building.

12. From a regional and local perspective, the European Union noted that the users and end-users of the results of the Regular Process in relation to capacity-building would primarily be countries which depended on marine and coastal environments for their livelihood or as a resource base, which called for strong regional and local ownership of, and participation in, the Regular Process as a whole. In that context, the European Union stressed that oceans also played an important role in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. If the Regular Process were to have an impact on the way in which the oceans were managed, it would be essential to apply transparent procedures and to work for strong regional and local ownership in the Process: developing countries and their experts needed to be engaged in the Process to secure global coverage and true ownership. The European Union stated that, in order to ensure that results were ultimately translated into policy action at the national level, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders should also be part of the overall Process. The Regular Process should be made global and focus not only on GEF-eligible regions. It should use existing capacity-building structures within the respective United Nations agencies, such as the Technical Cooperation Programme of the International Maritime Organization and the UNEP Regional Seas Programme, as well as within individual regional seas organizations, such as the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission and the Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, and regional fisheries management organizations.

C. Improving knowledge and methods of analysis

13. China expressed the view that the Regular Process should proceed from a scientific point of view in assessing global and supraregional issues of the marine environment that were of common concern to all countries and should not interfere in the specific maritime affairs of States. According to China, ecology should not be used as the sole standard in delineating the area of assessment of the Regular Process. The definition of assessment components should take into consideration the geographical scope of currently effective regional mechanisms.

14. Cuba suggested that, for all the reasons and factors mentioned in the report on the results on the "assessment of assessments", the design and objectives of the existing assessment processes must be standardized for the purpose of comparison.

15. The European Union proposed that, as a first step in the Regular Process, an inventory should be made of the information that would provide the most added value to support the development of a science-based policy at the local, regional and international levels. Efficient two-way communication between policymakers and scientific experts would be vital to guaranteeing that the right scientific knowledge were produced to fill policy-related gaps. The priorities for filling information gaps should not be identified solely on the basis of an analysis of the information currently lacking from a scientific perspective, but also from the perspective of perceived lacunae by policymakers.

16. The European Union expressed the view that marine analysis and evaluation strategies should be developed in consultation with all relevant bodies whose activities included reviews and assessments of the state of the marine environment, the identification of problems and the evaluation of processes and methodologies relevant to management actions for the protection of the marine environment.

D. Enhancing networking

17. Canada suggested that the Regular Process should be synergistic with ongoing processes, such as the proposed intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, and be fully integrated with existing marine assessment work, including work that is sectoral (e.g., fisheries, tourism) or thematic (e.g., coral reefs, marine debris).

18. The European Union observed that enhancing networking between the Regular Process and other existing activities, such as assessments of regional seas organizations, would prevent unnecessary duplication of effort. To facilitate such networking, the institutional arrangements for the Regular Process, its scope and its mandate should be further evaluated in order to clarify its relationship with other processes, such as those of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP), the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UNESCO.

19. The European Union placed special emphasis on linking up with institutions which had socio-economic expertise. The socio-economic aspects of living conditions and business, including industry, must be included more extensively in

the Regular Process. It noted that purely scientific information was of limited use for policymakers if it was not linked to policy options. Since socio-economic expertise was scarce, liaison arrangements with organizations and bodies with the necessary competence, such as the World Bank, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and regional development banks should be built into the Regular Process.

20. The European Union referred to Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (the Marine Strategy Framework Directive), suggesting that it be considered the European Union's regular process for reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment based on coordination mechanisms within marine regions.

21. Singapore recalled its strong working ties with regional institutions, such as Partnerships in the Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA). Singapore's Integrated Urban Coastal Management Plan was adapted from the PEMSEA integrated coastal management process, which served as a standard for coastal and marine environment management in the East Asian region and included a framework for implementing fully integrated assessment and monitoring mechanisms.

E. Ensuring effective communication

22. The European Union stressed that developing effective communication, education and public awareness strategies in the Regular Process was necessary to stimulate and engage people in the conservation of marine biodiversity and to use marine natural resources in a sustainable manner. It noted that expertise in communication was already available through professional networks that shared and exchanged such expertise across sectors. It also noted that key information pertaining to the marine environment needed to be collected, managed and communicated widely to stakeholders for adaptive management purposes. The design and implementation of a communication strategy could include web-based data sharing systems for different parts of the Regular Process. That could be done by mapping information through geographic information systems and by establishing websites where data can be constantly updated and shared. Furthermore, the communication strategy should also proactively include networking across a region with all institutions and programmes concerned to improve information-sharing (see also sect. D above).

III. Other fundamental building blocks identified by States

A. Objective, scope and characteristics of the Regular Process

23. Argentina stated that the objective of the Regular Process was to contribute reliable information to support decision-making processes in national and regional bodies and other competent entities by means of relevant and credible assessments. The objective of the Regular Process was not to modify or expand the remits that regional or global entities already had under their mandates.

24. Brazil noted that relevance, legitimacy and credibility were essential attributes for the assessment process, and its products were to be viewed as authoritative. Legitimacy in particular should result from a Regular Process that was inclusive.

25. Canada expressed its support for a Regular Process that would be balanced, credible and supportive of adaptive management. The Process should also be a transparent and holistic mechanism, providing sound and integrated scientific analyses with effective links to decision-making by relevant authorities and stakeholders and reflective of the global environmental, economic and social aspects of the oceans with the aim of supporting future policymaking. The Regular Process should also be representative and inclusive in terms of regional representation, well-defined and based on sound and integrated scientific analysis as well as mutually agreed terms of conduct, and committed to education and outreach.

26. China observed that the goal of a global assessment of the marine environment was to provide technical services and support for decision-making, and that it should not impose limitations on decision-making alternatives. It stressed that, operating within the United Nations framework, the Regular Process should strictly adhere to United Nations principles, regulations and procedures when undertaking assessment work. It also stated that the activities of the Regular Process should be in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, respecting the sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction of coastal States. Assessments in maritime areas subject to disputes over sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction should fully respect the views of the States concerned, without making any judgment in regard to the dispute and attempting to influence the positions of the parties involved.

27 The European Union stressed that the Regular Process was an enormous undertaking by all States and should not be addressed as a project, programme or short-term funding problem. It stated that States had strong ownership in, and were the owners of, the Regular Process. They were also the final recipients of its products and would implement the directions emanating from it. States also controlled and decided the way in which the United Nations would respond to the major challenge that the Regular Process constituted.

28. The European Union noted that, in the framework of the Regular Process, the development of a functional science-policy interface on marine issues would be a key element. An intergovernmental character would ensure that the outcomes of the Regular Process would be more widely accepted as a basis for decision-making. It would be crucial that the Regular Process generate products that were endorsed at an intergovernmental level, by every participating State.

29. The European Union stated that although the Regular Process would define areas in need of further investigation by United Nations agencies and others, its purpose was not to secure funding for such assessments (see also para. 60).

30. Madagascar noted that, given that a segment of the population depended entirely on the marine environment for its subsistence, the views of community associations that were working to monitor the state of the oceans should be given as much consideration as those of civil society and the private sector.

31. The United States of America observed that the vision of the Regular Process, namely, a systematic effort to provide a regular assessment of the state of the oceans, would enable better planning and decision-making at all levels of ocean and

coastal management. It expressed the view that the report on the results of the "assessment of assessments" outlined a scope that might be too far-reaching and ambitious for most assessments. Although one might wish that all assessments could address causes and impacts, it was important to consider the feasibility of the framework objectives.

32. The United States pointed out that the selection of sectoral case studies proposed in the report on the results of the "assessment of assessments" might be controversial. It would be important to avoid bias, or the perception of bias, when choosing appropriate case studies. The Regular Process might, therefore, consider developing standard criteria for the selection of case studies.

33. The United States stressed the importance of having a clearer description of the process for identification and selection of the stakeholders to be involved in the assessment. This was critical given the great diversity of knowledge and use of science among various stakeholders.

34. It noted that the report on the results of the "assessment of assessments" might lead to confusion, and proposed instead the development of a clearly defined procedure for presenting an agreed statement regarding the contradictory data, analyses or interpretations that supported the alternative conclusion.

B. Institutional arrangements

35. A number of States commented on the institutional arrangements for the Regular Process.

36. According to Argentina, it was necessary to ensure full and adequate governmental participation in decision-making, monitoring of the Regular Process and the appointment of experts. China suggested that the Regular Process should make full use of existing mechanisms in order to avoid duplication of labour and waste of resources.

Relationship to the United Nations and other processes

37. Argentina and Brazil expressed the view that since the General Assembly had decided to establish the Regular Process under the auspices of the United Nations, the Process was accountable to the Assembly. Brazil stated that the General Assembly should thus consider the objective, scope and findings, and undertake periodic evaluations of the Regular Process and its products. Brazil noted that, since it would be difficult for the General Assembly directly to carry out an in-depth examination, an institutional setup similar to that of IPCC might be useful. The link between the General Assembly and the Regular Process could be made by using as a model the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole of the General Assembly convened pursuant to resolution 63/111. Such an ad hoc group would review the final product of an assessment cycle ("assessment report"); based on that review, it would draft policy recommendations for the consideration of the General Assembly. The ad hoc group would also provide interim or status reports to the General Assembly on the work of the Regular Process, and be tasked with reviewing administrative matters pertaining to the organization of work of the Process. The group would fulfil a role similar to that of the plenary of IPCC, albeit of a recommendatory character to the General Assembly.

38. Canada considered that the General Assembly should convene ad hoc meetings as an interim option for the first cycle of the Regular Process, with a review of effectiveness to follow. It supported convening those meetings based on the model of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole. Canada noted that while States would retain control of outcomes, the ad hoc meetings would provide a forum for focused discussions that would respond to the needs and objectives of the Regular Process, with the participation of experts and with reports going directly to the General Assembly for its consideration, with no intermediary. Having no intermediary could increase the influence and visibility of the Process itself and its products. Having a dedicated forum would also help in keeping up to date with issues addressed and the progress made by the Regular Process.

39. China expressed its preference for the use of the United Nations Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea to assist the General Assembly in its consideration of the Regular Process.

40. The European Union stated that to secure ownership in and institutional memory of the Regular Process, the work should be carried out within the framework of the United Nations system of organizations and within other relevant intergovernmental organizations. It was of the view that the United Nations should, as a long-term commitment, act efficiently and coherently, and should use existing structures to assist its Member States in reaching the goals set out for the Regular Process. Responsibilities should be divided among United Nations agencies and there should be system-wide coherence and a high-level sanctioned commitment to the Regular Process in the United Nations as a whole. An evaluation should be made of which agency could take on the function of facilitating such coherence and commitment within the United Nations system (see para. 56). In that regard, it proposed the Oceans and Coastal Area Network (UN-Oceans), or a new arrangement. It noted that, in order to ensure an optimal utilization of resources and avoid duplication of effort, the interrelationship between the mandates, decision-making processes and institutional arrangements of the Regular Process and those of other related instruments, such as the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, GESAMP and GEF, needed to be clarified in detail. This was particularly important since UNEP would be involved in several of the new or existing instruments.

Management and review body

41. In relation to the management of the Regular Process, Brazil noted that in addition to plenary meetings open to the participation of all Member States, IPCC relied on a bureau and thematic working groups, a secretariat and technical support for its working groups. If the model were to be retained, Brazil stated that the bureau for the Regular Process would have to be appointed by the General Assembly. A chairperson would be elected for the Regular Process, who would also chair the bureau. The bureau would function as the management body of the Regular Process. Its members would provide guidance and lead the group of experts through the preparation of a Regular Process assessment report. Their mandate would correspond to the duration of an assessment cycle. The membership should include experts in disciplines relevant to the assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic disciplines. All regions should be represented in the Regular Process bureau. Two working groups would be tasked with, respectively, preparing the assessment reports ("assessment working group")

and defining strategies and capacity-building programmes ("capacity working group"). As was the case with IPCC, the assessment reports should rely on the best available science. A network of voluntary scientific contributors should be relied upon as well.

42. Canada expressed its preference for a mix of representatives of Governments, intergovernmental bodies and non-governmental bodies in a management and review body, the role of which should be to coordinate peer review of the assessments, with any policy review to be done by States by means of State-to-State negotiations. A representative mix would ensure that the Regular Process was responsive to the policy and decision-making needs of the appropriate authorities, while ensuring continuous engagement and dialogue between decision makers and experts. Canada pointed out that Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations should be fully engaged in the Process; more specifically, a continuous involvement and buy-in from Governments, which were responsible for any subsequent actions and their implications, was needed. It noted that modalities would need to be developed in relation to the role of States, while at the same time ensuring the involvement of others in a balanced way within the management and review body. It noted the need for a substantial majority input from States, with other members having a set of specific privileges and limitations.

43. In relation to State representation, Canada encouraged the setting up of a smaller, representative subset of Member States with rotating membership. In that regard, it expressed support for the recommendation, contained in the report on the results of the "assessment of assessments", for a membership of between 18 and 36 States, appointed in the same manner as the members of the Ad Hoc Steering Group (see General Assembly resolution 60/30, para. 92). Canada was of the view that a smaller membership would facilitate interaction with and among members, effective executive decision-making and the full engagement of its members and would reduce costs. It noted that an open-ended body would be cumbersome for management purposes, and would not necessarily respond to the types of decisions that would be required, such as the selection of experts and determination of the objectives of individual assessments.

44. Noting that the work of the Regular Process would touch upon the work of a substantial number of specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other global bodies, Canada stated that it was highly desirable that such agencies be associated formally with the work of the Regular Process in order to ensure proper linkages with and among them, help to reduce overlapping between their work and that of the Regular Process and help to ensure their full engagement with the Process. However, it also stated that the management and review body should be comprised mainly of States, and that representation among relevant intergovernmental organizations and stakeholders should be balanced.

45. Canada noted that modalities would need to be developed in relation to the decision-making process, including reserving the decision-making for States in cases in which consensus could not be reached. If the management and review body were to require a smaller executive committee to perform routine management functions, modalities would also need to be developed for that purpose.

46. China stressed that the primary guidance and decision-making role in the management and review body for the Regular Process should be undertaken by participating Member States, with representatives of intergovernmental

organizations and persons with relevant expertise providing advice and participating in the discussions.

47. The European Union stressed that, in accordance with the intergovernmental character of the Regular Process, the management and review body should have an open-ended composition of States and a mandate to negotiate and adopt the products generated by the Regular Process. Intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations should be involved as observers in a transparent and participative way. It also stressed the high desirability of the specialized agencies and other global bodies being closely associated with the work of the Regular Process in order to ensure proper linkages with those bodies and to build on existing structures and/or information. The European Union noted that the members of the management and review body should have a broader perspective in respect of marine management, including monitoring and assessment. The representatives also needed to have solid knowledge of various marine management and observation programmes, within and outside the United Nations system, while the experts should have the appropriate skills.

48. Madagascar expressed support for the appointment of representatives of Governments and non-governmental organizations to the management and review body. It proposed that the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change be added to the seven bodies to be involved in the Regular Process.

Panel of experts and additional pool of experts

49. In relation to experts, Argentina stressed that equitable regional representation and the participation of experts from developing countries should be ensured.

50. Canada expressed support for the creation of a panel of approximately 20 experts. The panel would ensure focused attention to the needs and objectives of the Regular Process as a substantial amount of time would need to be dedicated to the work of the Process. The modalities and criteria for the nomination and selection of the experts, their tenure and possible review, would need to be precisely outlined so as to ensure continuity and flexibility in the expertise available. Flexibility would ensure that the relevant type of expertise was available for a particular purpose.

51. Canada also expressed support for the establishment of an additional pool of experts by the management and review body (see paras. 42-45) and, when necessary, their appointment on a case-by-case basis, drawn from nominations by Governments and other relevant stakeholder organizations. This would provide for additional flexibility when launching a new process, ensuring that the relevant expertise was available to respond to the specific needs of any particular assessment. It noted that having both options would reduce the risk of not having the type of expertise required for a specific purpose.

52. The European Union stated that, rather than creating a completely new panel of experts for the Regular Process, the activities and expertise of GESAMP in particular, but not exclusively, should be employed.

Secretariat

53. Regarding secretariat services for the Regular Process, Argentina stressed its satisfaction with the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole,

endorsed by the General Assembly, suggesting that the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea to be deemed the appropriate body. While it recognized the valuable work of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO and of UNEP in implementing a mandate that had culminated in the submission of the report on the "assessment of assessments" to the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, it was of the view that the General Assembly was henceforth responsible for following up on the Regular Process. Thus, the provision of secretariat services by the Division would enable the Regular Process to be adequately linked to the work of the body that had established it.

54. Brazil agreed with the report on the results of the "assessment of assessments" that the secretariat of the Regular Process should be hosted within the United Nations structure in a body or bodies with experience in managing a scientific process, appropriate links to relevant expert communities and stakeholders and the competence to enter into agreements with potential partners and collaborating institutions. It stated that it would be more cost-effective if the future secretariat could draw on existing facilities and services and benefit from the standing and continuity of an established body or bodies. Brazil would thus favour, in accordance with the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, the secretariat services for the Regular Process being provided by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, with the support of other United Nations agencies and programmes. In that connection, it emphasized the need to strengthen the capacity of the Division if this option was to be pursued.

55. Canada encouraged the establishment of an inter-agency secretariat co-located in an intergovernmental organization that had experience in managing scientific processes. Since the work of the Regular Process could be expected to touch upon the work of a number of intergovernmental organizations, establishing an inter-agency secretariat co-located in one intergovernmental organization would assist in regard to coordination and synergy and in gaining broader institutional support and a sense of ownership on the part of the other intergovernmental bodies associated with the Regular Process. An inter-agency secretariat would also help to ensure that overlaps among agencies were avoided or managed so that there was no confusion over respective roles and/or mandates.

56. The European Union stressed that the future success of the Regular Process depended on the functional character of its secretariat. However, in its view, the operational and institutional arrangements of the Regular Process first needed to be discussed and clarified before decisions on the organization of the secretariat were taken (see also para. 40).

Focal points

57. Canada expressed support for the recommendations contained in the report on the "assessment of assessments" that Governments and relevant organizations identify focal points for the Regular Process and provide them with sufficient status and resources to interact effectively with it, with the relevant elements in their own organization and with other organizations within their region.

C. Financial and other support

58. Canada recognized that the Regular Process would require ongoing support and considered that such support would need to be provided on a voluntary basis for the first cycle, with the issue being revisited when reviewing the results of the first cycle of assessment. Modalities for voluntary support, including financial and in kind support, would need to be decided upon by Governments.

59. Cuba stated that the establishment of a fund to assist developing countries without identification of the funding sources could lead to an additional financial burden for States.

60. The European Union pointed out that funding must be linked to development mechanisms and the Millennium Development Goals. The World Bank, GEF and regional investment banks should also be involved. Instead of establishing new funding mechanisms for scientific research and capacity-building, it suggested that the Regular Process should aim at facilitating an optimal utilization of existing instruments, such as GEF, and of the existing funding of multilateral organizations (see para. 12). In that context, the European Union referred to the ongoing deliberations at UNEP on the establishment of the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services. The European Union noted that the Regular Process was interlinked with the development agenda.